

# CATFISH PROCESSING



ARKANSAS  
AGRICULTURAL  
STATISTICS  
SERVICE

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## Catfish Processing Down 3 Percent

Farm-raised catfish processed during January 2004 totaled 53.8 million pounds round weight, down 3 percent from January 2003. The average price paid to producers was 66.8 cents per pound for January 2004, up 3.9 cents from last month and 13.9 cents above a year ago.

Net pounds of processed fish sold during January 2004 totaled 27.1 million pounds, down 2 percent from the comparable month in 2003. Total end of the month inventory decreased 7 percent from last month, but was 9 percent above a year ago. Sales of fresh fish, at 10.6 million pounds, were down 2 percent from January 2003 and represented 39 percent of total sales. Frozen fish sales, at 16.5 million pounds, were down 1 percent from a year ago and accounted for the remaining 61 percent of total fish sales. Sales of whole fish represented 16 percent of the total fish sold, fillets accounted for 62 percent, and the remaining 22 percent were mostly steaks, nuggets, and value added products.

The January 2004 average price received by processors for total fresh fish was \$2.13 per pound, up 26 cents from last year. Prices for fresh whole fish were \$1.49 per pound, up 21 cents from last year. Prices for fresh fillets were up 15 cents at \$2.59 per pound. Total frozen fish averaged \$2.15 per pound, up 3 cents from January 2003. Prices for frozen whole fish were up 9 cents at \$1.90, while frozen fillets at \$2.47 per pound were up 8 cents from a year ago.

Freshwater imports of frozen, boneless catfish fillets for December 2003 totaled 213 thousand pounds, 76 percent below a year ago. Fifty-nine percent of the imports were from China, 34 percent from Vietnam, and the remainder coming from Guyana and Thailand.

Exports of frozen boneless catfish fillets totaled 228 thousand pounds, all of which were to Kuwait. Fresh fillet exports totaled 3.96 thousand pounds, going to Japan and the United Kingdom.

Import and export data are compiled by the U.S. Bureau of Census.

## 2003 Catfish Processing Up 5 Percent

Farm-raised catfish processed during 2003 totaled 662 million pounds, 5 percent above the 631 million pounds processed in 2002. The average price paid to producers in 2003 was 58.1 cents per pound, 2 percent above the 56.8 cents paid last year.

Net pounds of processed fish sold in 2003 totaled 319 million pounds, up 1 percent from the 318 million pounds sold last year.

The 2003 average price received for processed fish was \$2.05 per pound, down 1 percent from \$2.07 a year ago.

Inventory on hand at the end of 2003 totaled 13.6 million pounds, an increase of 11 percent from the 12.3 million pounds at the close of 2002.

**Farm-Raised Catfish: Quantity Processed by Major Processors,  
United States, 2003-2004**

Month	Round Weight Processed					Percent of Previous Year
	Monthly		Percent of Previous Year	Cumulative		
	2003	2004		2003	2004	
	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>		<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	
			<i>Percent</i>			<i>Percent</i>
Jan	55,523	53,849	97	55,523	53,849	97
Feb	55,461			110,984		
Mar	65,007			175,991		
Apr	57,105			233,096		
May	58,424			291,520		
Jun	52,441			343,961		
Jul	54,089			398,050		
Aug	54,153			452,203		
Sep	51,885			504,088		
Oct	57,652			561,740		
Nov	51,246			612,986		
Dec	48,518			661,504		

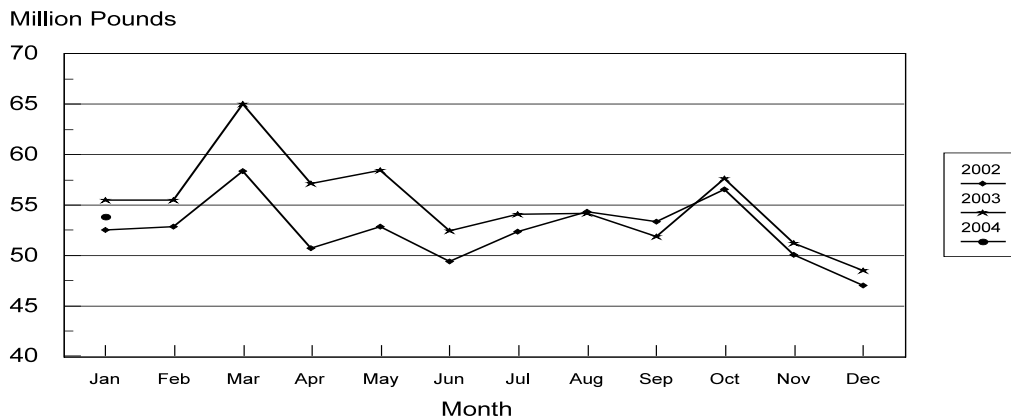
**Farm-Raised Catfish: Prices Paid to Producers by Processors  
and Imports, United States, 2003-2004**

Month	Price per Pound <sup>1</sup>		Change from Previous Year  Dollars	Imports <sup>2</sup>		Percent of Previous Year  Percent
	2003	2004		2002	2003	
	<i>Dollars</i>	<i>Dollars</i>		<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	<i>1,000 Pounds</i>	
Jan	0.529	0.668	0.139	1,037	1,322	127
Feb	0.544			1,048	260	25
Mar	0.585			414	332	80
Apr	0.630			618	272	44
May	0.618			1,491	703	47
Jun	0.586			982	893	91
Jul	0.564			957	435	45
Aug	0.552			632	135	21
Sep	0.560			670	150	22
Oct	0.567			572	384	67
Nov	0.610			874	331	38
Dec	0.629			906	213	24

<sup>1</sup> Price for fish delivered to the processing plant door. Price includes charges for any services provided by the processing plant, such as seining and hauling, but does not include adjustments based on year-end settlements.

<sup>2</sup> Pounds of frozen boneless fillets. Data furnished by U.S. Bureau of Census.

**Catfish Processed  
United States 2002-2004**



**Catfish Processors: Sales Volume, Average Price, and Ending  
Inventory, United States, January 2003-2004**

Item	Sales Volume		Average Price		Ending Inventory	
	2003 <i>1,000 Pounds</i>	2004 <i>1,000 Pounds</i>	2003 <i>Dollars per Pound</i>	2004 <i>Dollars per Pound</i>	2003 <i>1,000 Pounds</i>	2004 <i>1,000 Pounds</i>
Fresh Fish						
Whole						
Round & Gutted	1,194	952	0.83	0.95	*	*
Whole Dressed	2,639	2,253	1.46	1.69	*	*
Total	3,833	3,205	1.28	1.49	274	191
Other						
Steaks	105	100	1.93	2.00	*	*
Nuggets	1,368	1,005	1.16	1.20	120	110
Other <sup>1</sup>	195	330	2.80	2.83	*	*
Total	1,668	1,435	1.40	1.63	159	138
Fillets <sup>2</sup>	5,362	5,964	2.44	2.59	561	507
Total Fresh	10,863	10,604	1.87	2.13	994	836
Frozen Fish						
Whole Dressed	1,266	1,185	1.81	1.90	1,265	1,401
Other						
Steaks	129	132	1.72	1.80	69	88
Nuggets	2,784	3,051	1.06	1.00	1,475	2,049
Other <sup>1</sup>	1,114	1,325	2.41	2.48	1,256	893
Total	4,027	4,508	1.45	1.46	2,800	3,030
Fillets <sup>2</sup>	11,428	10,843	2.39	2.47	6,545	7,438
Total Frozen	16,721	16,536	2.12	2.15	10,610	11,869
Fresh & Frozen Fish						
Whole						
Round & Gutted	1,194	952	0.83	0.95	*	*
Whole Dressed	3,905	3,438	1.57	1.76	*	*
Total	5,099	4,390	1.41	1.60	1,539	1,592
Other						
Steaks	234	232	1.81	1.89	*	*
Nuggets	4,152	4,056	1.09	1.05	1,595	2,159
Other <sup>1</sup>	1,309	1,655	2.47	2.55	*	*
Total	5,695	5,943	1.44	1.50	2,959	3,168
Fillets <sup>2</sup>	16,790	16,807	2.41	2.51	7,106	7,945
Total Fresh & Frozen	27,584	27,140	2.02	2.14	11,604	12,705

\* Not published to avoid disclosure of individual operations.

<sup>1</sup> Includes all products not already reported including weight of breading and added ingredients.

<sup>2</sup> Includes regular, shank, and strip fillets; excludes any breaded products.

## **Catfish Processing Estimates**

**Survey Procedures:** Survey data for catfish processing are collected from approximately 23 processors. All participating processors must meet the minimum criteria of having a capacity to process at least 2,000 pounds live weight of catfish per 8-hour shift. The survey is conducted entirely by NASS Headquarter's staff in Washington, D.C. NASS field offices, however, are responsible for keeping Headquarters informed of any new processing operations in their state to ensure that the survey coverage is as complete as possible. Processors are contacted either by mail or telephone. Diligent effort is made to ensure that all operations are accounted for in the estimate.

**Estimation Procedures:** The "**Catfish Processing**" report refers strictly to farm-raised fish and excludes wild capture fish. Prior to summarization, questionnaires are compared with the previous month's reports for comparable placement of data, reasonable price levels, and reasonable inventory carryover given the sales and processing totals reported. Estimates are made for those processors whose reports are not available in time to be included in the release. These plants are identified by an asterisk on page 5 of this release. Estimates are normally based on the processor's previous report and current conditions. Published totals are a straight summation of the individual reports and estimated data. Price items are weighted by the associated volumes to compute weighted average prices. The published price for total whole fish, however, reflects an adjustment to the round and gutted only price to bring it to an equivalent dressed weight price.

If a plant uses a fiscal accounting system, proration is used to convert reported data to a calendar month basis. Only national level estimates are published due to the limited number of plants involved. Generally, individual items are not published if there are less than three plants reporting, or if any one plant has 60 percent or more of the total.

One unique feature of the "**Catfish Processing**" report is the listing of cooperating processors by name on each month's release. This feature originally was used to solicit industry cooperation in maintaining coverage, but it has continued because of the processors' overall acceptance of this policy.

Import and export data for frozen catfish fillets, which are compiled by the Department of Commerce, are also included in this report.

**Reliability:** Catfish processing estimates are based on a census of all known active processors and, therefore, have no sampling variability. However, estimates may be subject to errors such as omissions, duplication, and mistakes in reporting, recording, and processing of the data. These errors are minimized through strict quality controls in the edit and summarization process, and a careful review of all reported data for consistency and reasonableness.

**Revision Policy:** Revisions may be necessary following a review of late reports received from plants. Revisions of less than 2 percent of the existing published levels of any category will normally not be made.